VANITY.

SUSAN SIDLE.

"Turn my eyes from beholding vanity."

What is the defintion of vanity? Why emptiness, fruitless desires, trifling labors, vain pursuits, idle show and petty pride. In the 119th Psalm 37th verse, David prayed to the Lord to turn his eyes from beholding vanity. After he had spent much of his time in vanity, and had committed sin, and when his time was drawing toward the close of life, his desire and prayer was, "Teach me, O Lord the way of thy statutes and I shall keep them unto the end;" then prayed that his eyes might be turned from beholding vanity around him. No doubt David encouraged superfluous dressing and wearing of splendid ornaments, of which he had to repent in his old age; but, it seems they had trouble with those things in his old age. We read in Genesis 38, where the woman deceived the man by strange or unbecoming dress—a dress that only belonged to evil women. No doubt the Ninevites had got out of order, in dressing, and by the preaching of Jonah, the king laid his robe aside and they all covered with sackcloth and repented. We learn from Zephaniah 1st that the Lord will punish all such as are clothed with strange apparel; and Isaiah says, in the third chapter, "There is a day coming that the Lord will take away all their ornaments of wearing of gold and superfluities;" and why? because, the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes. No doubt those things were sinful in that old time; but they were upheld and encouraged by some of their leaders the same as they are now. Jeremiah says to the virgins of Israel, that shall again be adorned with tabrets, and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry." I suppose the maidens had been richly adorned with gold and costly array to go forth in the dances. There was the place that ornamental array belonged at that time, and there is where it belongs now in our time. In the theater, in the ball room, and in places where sinners meet to make merry; and not in the church of the living God. Is there any one who has joined the church and professed to follow Christ in all his appointed ways, and promised when they made their baptismal vow, to renounce the devil and all his works, and then gone back to that old dispensation to look up the ornamental adorning of those old sinners; to sustain their pride and vanity in this our time? why not, also, go forth in the dances and in places where sinners meet to make merry. The sin would be no greater; but, says one, "vanity has no connection with the fashionable adornment of the body." We know vanity belongs to many other things besides pride; but in this case, it is the hight of vanity: because it is visible to the public gaze; and, if laid in the balance, it would be lighter than vanity. No doubt those were the things that David prayed the Lord to turn his eyes from beholding in his old age; and would be ready to say, with some in our day, that those sinful ornaments are a strong evidence of a weak mind and a proud heart.

Pride is one of the leading sins, and is an abomination in the sight of God. Wherever we see the word in the sacred volume, there is always a denunciation pronounced against it; but there are a few who have not broken the vow which they made when they covenanted with the Lord, and are still willing to be led and guided by that Spirit that will lead us into all truth. Why are not all led in the same direction? That spirit which we have the promise of receiving at our baptism, surely is the same as it ever was; and will lead us all in the same course, if we are willing to submit ourselves to its teachings; but there are some that resist that Spirit; and say, "Go for this time, at a more convenient season I will yield to thy teachings—when I am done following the amusements and fashions of the world, and then in my declining years like David they pray the Lord to turn their eyes from beholding vanity.

I remember well the words of a dear sister who not long since said, "The Holy Spirit told me at my baptism to adorn my body in humility; and seeing the command the apostles have given in that direction not to wear gold nor costly array, but to be adorned in modest apparel, as the holy women of old adorned themselves, and to have the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price. "I know," said she, "God resisteth the proud; but giveth grace to the humble." The Apostle James says, "Have no respect to the person that weareth gay clothing." Her closing words were, "By the grace of God I am determined to keep that noble resolve as long as life shall last" That is a noble resolve, dear sister, and how pleasant it would be if we could hear such cheering words from many others. Dear sister, whoever you are, hold on to the old landmarks; and, if you cannot do *much* good by voice, or pen, in turning out that monster sin of pride, you can set a good example, and need not fear that you will be brought to an account for making the effort. We read in Daniel: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." I don't think that any one is worried at the sight of the fashionably adorned maidens so long as she keeps her ornaments where they belong, in the outside world. It is on account of the condition of the church, that many are worried and feel sad when we see pride and vanity, folly and stumbling blocks that have been brought into the church, mostly by those fashionable, worldly adorned maidens. Is it any wonder that some feel sad when we believe that those stumbling blocks are keeping many out of the church.

But while we pass along we have to wonder where are the Watchmen that have been stationed on the walls of Zion, of which we read in the 23rd chapter of Ezekiel, that they don't warn the people and tell them of their sins, for their blood might be required at the watchman's hands, if they blow not the trumpet and warn the people. But, dear fellow-travelers through this wilderness world whether you be yet young or advanced in life, you need not go so far back as that old dispensation, for a pattern to adorn your bodies. Only go back a little over eighteen hundred years, and take a view, or form an idea, of the adornment of those holy women, that went weeping to the sepulchre early in the morning, before the rising of the sun, to see their risen Savior. No doubt they went in the plainest manner. They wore nothing to indicate vanity before their blessed Master. No doubt those were the holy women that the Apostle alluded to and recommends us to adorn our bodies as they adorned themselves, and with an ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which in the sight of God is of great price. But, says one, if you dress so plainly you will not look well at tea parties or other social gatherings. Don't you know how thankful we are that we are accounted unworthy to be seen at such gatherings, where we could not keep our eyes from beholding vanity? But we go to church which is a part of our earthly home. The Apostle tells us not to neglect the assembling of ourselves together, and the Savior says, Where only two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them, and that to bless. The church we would love to see an humble, solemn and holy place, but we have to behold pride and vanity even there.

In closing, I would say, dear fellow members of the church of Christ that is built upon the rock of Christ Jesus, a sure foundation stone, lay aside your vanity and come work in the vineyard. for there is much to do. Rise up in newness of life, and follow the teachings of Christ and the Apostles and you will surely be led in the right path, through the narrow gate. What a glorious change there would be in the church and in the world if the rising generation would turn their eyes from beholding vanity, and their hearts from putting it into practice. We are informed that God wants his people to be a separate people from the world, a marked difference in all their conduct and conversation, between the people of God and the people of the world. A Christian must show an example of his profession to be useful, and should as much as possible be engaged in holy communion with his heavenly Father. Now, in order to be perfect, we must do all that Christ has commanded us to do, for in searching the word of God—the true criterion, the mirror in which every one can see what he must be in order to be accepted with God,—the Christian looks beyond all that may befall him in this world, and there in the promised rest, the joy, the peace, the glory which passeth human understanding, he sees his reward. The sufferings and trials on earth may last a year or even threescore years and ten, but they will pass away, they must have an end, and then the faithful Christian, when safely landed in the bosom of his Father, will look back to the scene of his sufferings and rejoice with exceeding great joy, because of his happy triumph that he has now escaped all and everything that can harm or grieve him forever. His life is at best a mere shadow of time. Yet a little while and the golden hours of life will be gone, and your souls launched into eternity, and blessed are they that do his commandments for they shall have a right to the tree of life and can enter in through the gates into the city.

East Coventry, Pa.

Satan always rocks the cradle when we sleep at the devotions. If we would prevail with God, we must wrestle; and if we would wrestle happily with God, we must wrestle first with our own dullness.

OUR FINGER MARKS.

BY W. C. PERRY.

A mason was once employed to whiten the walls of a certain room. The material which he was to use was almost colorless, until it had dried at least twelve hours. In the room stood a desk which had in its drawer a pocketbook, and a bag which was supposed to contain money. On the morning after the work was completed, the owner of the room and desk, came in to inspect the work. Immediately on entering he saw "finger marks" upon the drawer. When he opened it he found marks also on the pocket-book and bag. This clearly showed that the mason had handled these things with his wet fingers, without thinking that after a certain length of time his fingermarks would betray his wicked intentions. And, to this day he does not know that his employer knows it.

It is thus with our evil thoughts, words and actions. They are leaving marks upon our characters, upon our souls—though they seem invisible at the time in which they take place. They do not only betray us to God, but also to those around us. How often do we say and do little things, as we are prone to call them, which betray us by their marks!

Have you never been a looker-on and observed very closely the language and actions of those who call themselves Christians? Did you not quickly see the marks left by some vain, careless expression, yet unnoticed by the author of it? When you saw it, did you not say to yourself: That was not very becoming for a Christian? The same is true of us. Others are looking upon us, as Christians, very critically. They see the marks left by our idle words and actions while we are perfectly unconscious of them. These marks displace the confidence others have in us. They destroy our influence, and we wonder and wonder why it is that our influence is failing. Although we are not perfect, yet I wish to impress this upon our minds, that we be more careful each day as to what we say and do. We can not be too careful and thoughtful. Our language at the present day is becoming badly corrupted by low, mean, vile expressions, such that do not become the Christian to use. They are used so much that their corruptness becomes invisible to us, and we use them without thinking, just like the mason did that left the marks. Have you ever thought of the origin of those commonplace phrases, which you hear so often used now-a-days, such as: "No good," "you bet," "all the same," and others? Their origin is in the very lowest classes of society,—such in which the Christian would not want to be caught. Knowing this, then, how can we suffer ourselves to mark up our Christian characters with such expressions. Let it be said again, that we should be very, very careful not to use them, for others expect more of us, and God will demand more of us. Christians are to be lights to those in darkness; yet if their lights are not seen, or are not bright, how can others see to walk thereby?

And, more, we must always remember that the Christian's character is the reflex of the image and glory of the divine character,—the finite receiving, and reflecting the infinite upon those around, and also back again to its origin testifying of its likeness. Such being true, then we know that he, who would be Godlike, Christ-like does not and must not mark his character with vile, idle words, or low, trifling actions. As the proberb goes, Actions alone speak louder than words; but how is it when words correspondingly accompany actions? Oh, let us be more careful each day as to what we say and do. The rays of our Christian light should dispel the dark clouds of sin, from those around us, making them feel happy, just as the beautiful rays of the sun dispel the overshadowing darkness making us feel happy again after a short season of gloomy weather.

A Story with a Moral.

"What a noisy world this is!" croaked an old frog, as he squatted on the margin of the pool. "Do you hear those geese, how they scream and fuss! And what for?"

"Oh, just to amuse themselves," answered a little field mouse.

"Presently we shall have the owls hooting; what is that for?"

"It's the music they like the best," replied the mouse.

"And those grasshoppers, they can't go home without grinding and chirping; why do they do that?"

"Oh, they're so happy they can't help it," said the mouse.

"You find excuses for all; I believe you don't understand music, if you like the hideous noises."

"Well, friend to be honest with you," said the mouse, "I don't greatly admire any of them, but they are all sweet to my ears compared with the constant croaking of a frog.—*Pansy.*

THE PASTOR.

D. F. RAMSEY.

God in the plan of human redemption, has established various offices, and has assigned his servants their work, according to their several abilities.

But, second to none, is the great responsibility of the pastor—the shepherd of the flock. Though he may not be so wise as the theologian, so profound and eloquent as the *stars* of our various churches, so effectual as our evangelists in calling sinners to the blessed Master, yet his duties are laborious, and seldom appreciated. He is comparatively unknown to the Christian world in general. The heads of the churches know him by *name* as a man that lives in some remote section, and are apt to speak of him as a man that will never turn the world upside down; but, as a passing remark, he is a good, kind-hearted, well-meaning man.

The pastor should not be a rich man, or he might forget God, and loose that sympathy which he should have for the poor. He should not be poor, or he might become covetous, and violate the law he teaches others to observe; but he should be honest, and live and labor, that his necessary wants will be supplied; and further, have a little time to spare so he could demonstrate his teachings by a good example of benevolence.

The faithful pastor is in the strictest sense, a servant—a man who has little time "to make merry with his friends;" always has a week's work ahead: like the man who has left his office for a vacation, when he returns he hardly knows where to begin. If there are any dead or dying in the community, he is expected to be the first on the scene, and the last to leave. If anything goes wrong in the church, he must shoulder the responsibility. If A sees an imaginary wrong in B, the pastor should look the matter up; then, in case he is closeted too long with B, A becomes jealous.

The pastor should be a patient man; for his predecessor passed over the same ground and in all probability, you will leave some unfinished work for your successor. The pastor should be physically strong. He should be able to labor six days in the week, and get along on five hours sleep each night. Brains are not essential. If he has no time to development fifteen ounces, what would he do with fifty; unless he would make the same use of it that the majority of pastors do, let it lie dormant.

The pastor should be as grave as a sexton or deacon, especially on Sunday at 10:20 and 7:30. If the people laugh at his ignorance and stupidity, he should imagine that he has made a point and they see it.

In conclusion, I will say, he should be *iron clad* and *bomb proof*, so as to be able to resist anything short of electricity. Hunt this man up, locate him, encourage him, tell him we will have a different state of affairs by and by.

"Its better farther on."

Conemaugh, Pa., Sept. 28.

PROMISES.

BY R. K. BINKLEY.

A promise is an obligation. A note is but a promise in writing. God's promises are in writing, and he says they are *Yea* and *Amen.* But how often since our baptismal promises, have we failed to redeem them. God has just redeemed one of his by sending us an abundant rain, after the severest drouth we have ever had; but still we will forget Him, and not regard our promises, though as binding upon us as is his upon himself.

Recently a conservative sister remarked, that soon we could not tell our members from worldlings and vain professors, "who say and do not," but when we look around us and see the great work that is to be done, will we spend our time and money foolishly? I trust not. But let us be an honor to God in our bodies and in our substances, and our lives will be hid with Christ in God. Let us remember that the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are not of the Father. Many persons have made predictions concerning us, and it seems would be glad to see them come true; but if we earnesly pray to God, he will help us to redeem our promises, and to present our bodies as an acceptable sacrifice to Him. Let us deny ourselves of a few sinful pleasures that are of short duration, for the joys that are unfading.

Christ the Physician.

The Lord is so fond of healing sin-sick souls that he had but one Son, and he made a physician of him that he might come and heal mankind of their deadly wound; and he being a physician came down among us, and sought out for his patients, not the good and excellent, but the most guilty; for he said, "The whole have no need of a physician, but the sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."—*Spurgeon.*